

NOCPIA  
BOARD MEETING

11/24/2020

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners (the "Board") of the New Orleans City Park Improvement Association (the "NOCPIA") was called to order Tuesday, November 24, 2020, at 4 p.m. by President Larry Katz. Due to the COVID-19 virus, the meeting was held in person as well as via Google Meets.

PRESENT: Commissioners Adkerson, Banks, Batt, Cahn, Dale, Gardner, Giarrusso, Hess, Hollis, Katz, LeCorgne, Lester, Lupo, Masinter, McNeil, Pate, Rodriguez, Savoie, Taylor, Thorpe, Waller, and Worley

ABSENT: Commissioners Arata, Baker, DeBlieux, Fitzpatrick, King, Leger, Morrell, Nossler, Pineda, Seamon, Spears, and Williams

STAFF: Bob Becker, Keith Hemel, Casie Duplechain, and Denise Joubert

COUNSEL: Henry Kinney

GUESTS:

In accordance with Executive Orders issued by Governor John Bel Edwards, this notice shall serve as a certification of the New Orleans City Park Improvement Association's inability to operate in accordance with the Louisiana Open meetings law as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. Members of the public may attend the meeting in person, observing all appropriate public health guidance or submit an email before the beginning of the meeting, which will be read to the Association's members before any action on any agenda item.

Anyone wishing to comment on any item on the agenda must sign-in or submit their comments via email and indicate what item they wish to comment on. There were no public comments received.

Larry Katz, President of the NOCPIA Board of Commissioners, called the meeting to order. The board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

A quorum is present and voting throughout the meeting.

Katz reminded all Commissioners that the Ethics and Sexual Harassment training must be completed by December 31.

In his President's report, Larry Katz stated that he attended the preview of the Celebration in the Oaks driving tour and he said that it was a fabulous experience. He said that the Park received great comments about the display. He thought it was exceptional that Bob Becker, and Rob DeViney, were there to greet the public as they entered. Several members of the Board also attended and echoed the same sentiments.

In the Management Report, Chief Executive Officer Becker reported that the Park had a good month financially in October. He reported that the Governor signed HB 39 which included a \$2.5 million appropriation for City Park. Becker said that we have been in contact with the Treasury Department and discovered that the Treasury keeps a list of State agencies that have had findings by state auditors. Fortunately, the park does not have any findings, so we are permitted to apply for entire \$2.5 million in a single lump sum payment. We will apply \$1.5 million to replenish the Park's reserves, and the remainder will be applied to offset monthly deficits. He said that the monthly deficits was \$500,000 a month in March and April which caused the Park to make difficult personnel decisions to reduce payroll. He continued saying that by August and September, our monthly deficit was about \$200,000. In October it was \$100,000. He said that the improvement came from donations and slowing increasing revenue from venues we were allowed to open. He noted that the Commissioner agrees that additional support might be necessary in the next Legislative session.

Chief Financial Officer Keith Hemel reported that the net income in October was \$190,000. This is mainly due to revenue received from Ghost in the Oaks and unrestricted donations. He also said that we had strong performances in City Putt, Storyland, and Tennis. Golf continues to perform well and is ahead of budget for the 5<sup>th</sup> month by roughly \$70,000.

Hemel reported:

- Accrued \$155,000 deposit for Voodoo even though they didn't hold the event.
- The Park submitted about \$600,000 of COVID related expenses to the State under the Cares Act. The State approved about \$300,000, but they ran out of money and can only \$24,000 to the Park. He said that the Park should get the remaining money if another stimulus package is passed.
- The Park has spent approximately \$200,000 on debris removal from Hurricane Zeta. The funds are reimbursable from FEMA.
- The sale of tickets for Celebraton in the Oaks is going well. He said that we sold about \$150,000 in driving tour tickets and \$45,000 in train tickets.

Becker mentioned that the State Bond Commissioner approved the planning funds for the renovation of the old maintenance buildings and the expansion of the new tennis courts.

Becker reviewed the impact that COVID restrictions on the Park.

He mentioned that we hosted several football games at Pan Am and Tad Gormley stadium. He said that there were 35 events scheduled in October, and that all but 2 were canceled due to capacity restrictions. He continued saying that in November, there were 44 events scheduled and all but 2 were canceled.

Commissioner Richard Cahn asked if the Park is entitled to retain the deposit for the 2020 Voodoo event. Becker said that we will keep the deposit, and at the end of the month the Park is due another deposit for the 2021 event. He speculates that Voodoo will request that the deposit from 2020 be applied to the 2021 event. Katz commented that the contract with Voodoo is very

clear, and he does not think that last year's deposit should be used as a partial payment for next year's event. Commissioner Lupo said that he thinks we need to speak to them and negotiate and not just automatically decided. Becker thinks that they could declare this an act of God. Commissioner Lupo said that he know that insurance companies do not view this as an Act of God.

Commissioner Richard Cahn asked about the payment that the Park is due from the Cares Act. Becker said that were were told to apply for the Cares Act, and there was just enough money to pay out the claim approved for the Park. Hemel explained that the Cares Act was more open on what items could be reimbursed rather than going through FEMA directly. , therefore we submitted our claims to the Cares Act first. He said that the FEMA claim is much more restrictive, and that we could not submit a reimbursement request for salaries.

#### Committee Reports:

P, A&E – Commissioner Bill LeCorgne reported that the Park is finalizing the Master Plan documents for the Wisner Tract. The plan will be implemented when the funds are available. Commissioner Robert Lupo asked about the status of the water retention project. Becker said that we have provided comments on drafts of the agreement between the City and City Park and are waiting for the City to respond. The 60 percent drawing submission has been deferred until January.

#### CITO/Special Events – No Report

Development – Chief Development Officer Casie Duplechian reported that we are continuing to work with the Friends of City Park and the Botanical Foundation on the general support campaign. She said that the overall fundraising goals set by the adhoc steering committee in August was \$5,000.00. We are currently at \$3.4 million which includes:

- \$2.5 million from the State;
- \$380,00 Covid campaign
- \$108,000 – Celebration in the Oaks
- \$71,000 - Ghost in the Oaks

Duplechain reported on the following:

- Letter mailed to past and current Board Members asking them to join the 1,000 for \$1,000 Oak Tree Circle. Also distributed a list of everyone who contributed \$1,000 in 2020, as well as sponsors for Celebration in the Oaks.

President Katz stated that we have to ask people; to donate at every event. Commissioner Leigh Thorpe said that she thought people attending the dinners in the garden considered that a donation to the Park. She thinks that some would think it abrasive if we make a hard ask that night. She thought a follow up ask would be more appropriate. Katz said that Commissioner Susan Hess began the Oak Tree Circle in 2014. We only had 35 members, but now we have 116.

He said it must continue to expand and become a steady source of revenue that can be relied on by the Park.

Becker reported that we sent a donation request to former board members asking them to join the Oak Tree Circle, and about 10% responded with a donation. He encouraged present board members who are acquainted with former board members to reach out and for a donation.

Duplechain said that anyone who donates \$ 1,000 for three consecutive years will become an Oak Tree “Capstone member”. She also mentioned at Commissioner Mike Hollis committed to \$7,500 sponsor for the Treasure Chest Rock in Storyland. Katz thanked him for his contribution. Commissioner Paul Masinter recommended that we have an annual event for former board members to provide an update of the Park.

Environmental Stewardship – Commissioner Carro Gardner reported that The New Orleans Town Gardeners will work with the Native Plant initiative on Phase 3 of remediation and planting at Big Lake Louisiana Trail

Finance & Audit – No Report.

Friends – Commissioner Larry Dale thanked the Friends Executive Board and Casie Duplechain for working together to be an intricate support group for the Park. President Katz thanked the Friends of City Park for the contributions that they made to the park over the past years.

H&G Committee/Dog Park – Commissioner David Waller reported that Tim Benton is propagating oak trees from acorns collected in the Park. They are a hardier species than some that we have recently purchased. Benson will grow the trees on his property in Plaquemines Parish. The Park will obtain some of these trees to plant in the Park. There will also be some available to sell in the Greenhouse. President Katz asked if a certificate would come with the trees purchased. Waller replied that they would because they would be very unique signature trees.

Legal & Risk Management – No Report

NOMA – Commissioner Robert Lupo asked if the Park received any income from NOMA related to entrance fees at the new Sculpture Garden. Becker said that Keith Hemel has been in touch with the Museums CFO and we expect to settle up at the end of the year.

Wisner Tract – No Report

Public Relations – President Katz thanked Commissioner Chenier Taylor for a great article on NOLA.com about Celebration in the Oaks.

Nominating – The Board voted unanimously to elect Carro Gardner, Vice-President; David Waller, Vice-President; Liz Sloss, Vice-President; Bill LeCorgne, Treasurer; and Bryan Fitzpatrick, Secretary. The Board also voted to elect Robert Lupo, Lori Savoie, and Richard Cahn to serve a second four-year term. The Board also voted unanimously to elect Jessica

Brandt, Liz Sloss, and Karen Coaxum for three of the open at-large positions on the Board. President Katz thanked the members of the Nominating Committee for their work.

Sports – No Report

Tennis – No Report

Botanical Garden Foundation – President Katz said that he has been singing the praises of Commissioner Rebecca Lester all year for the outstanding work on new programs introduced and the outdoor kitchen at the Botanical Garden. He mentioned that he attended the Frank Brightsen dinner. The food was fantastic and was touched that he spoke about the value of supporting City Park at the end of his presentation. Lester thanked President Katz for his kind words. She said that she is working to increase the dinners and engaging new chefs. She mentioned that we are not hosting the Magic in the Moonlight fundraiser, but instead request that those who normally purchase d tickets to the dinner, increase their donation to \$1,000 and be a part of the Oak Tree Circle. She continued saying that they are attempting to not solicit the same people to support City Park over and over. She said that are attempting to hoping to raise \$300,000.

OTHER REPORTS:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15, 2020 @ 4 pm.